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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

Letter dated 6 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the final report of the Pan-African Conference of Peace, Gender and Development, held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 1 to 3 March 1997 (see annex).

I would request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 12, 97(g), 99, 102, 105 and 106.

(Signed) Gideon KAYINAMURA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Rwanda to the United Nations

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Final report of the Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development held at Kigali from 1 to 3 March 1997

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1. INTRODUCTION

From 1st to 3rd March 1997, a Panafrican Conference on the theme "Peace, Gender and Development" was held in Kigali, Rwanda. This conference was a follow-up to the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995.

It was held under the auspices of the Rwanda Government, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). It was organised by a committee of local women organisation (PRO-FEMMES/TWESE HAMWE) and the National Women Consultative Committee as well as the Ministry of Family and Women in Development.

The Conference was supported by the Dutch Government , SNV-RWANDA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Programme for Women's Promotion (UNIFEM), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the UNICEF, England, the European Union and the Organisation of African Unity and the Economic Community for Africa.

The Panafrican Conference brought together some 183 participants drawn from political decision makers, the civil society and economic operators, not only from African countries but also from the international community and several women promotion organisations.

The conference was blessed with the presence of Her Excellency Mrs Mary ROBINSON, President of Ireland; Her Excellency Doctor Speciosa KAZIBWE, Vice-President of Uganda; His Excellency Ambassador Pascal GAYAMA, OAU Deputy Secretary General; Doctor Sadik NAFIS, UNFPA Executive Director; Mrs Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF, UNDP Deputy Administrator and Regional Director and Mrs Gertrude MONGELLA, Secretary General of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

In this conference Africa was represented by 118 women delegates from 21 countries, 8 delegates represented other countries such as Belgium, China, Ireland and Canada. NGO's and International Organisations were represented by 51 participants.

The objectives of the Conference were to evolve a follow-up plan for peace, gender equality and development, to define its mechanisms and implementation factors as well as to shed light on responsibilities of all the concerned partners in this process. It had also the aim of proposing an information exchange system and to set up a cooperation network for all the partners involved in peace and development process all over the African continent.

The five main objectives, of the Conference were as follows :

- to promote a panafrican awareness in keeping and struggling for peace, in seeking integrated and sustainable development and gender equality in reference to the Rwandan experience;

- to define the participatory role of the African women in conflict prevention and resolution, in maintenance of social cohesion and in reconstruction efforts in post-conflict countries ;

- to strengthen links between various partners, namely Governments, the civil society, the international community and the private sector in support of full participation of women in the process of searching peace and development;

- to strengthen the spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance among African countries mostly in difficult situations and to tighten the continental links with the international community ;

- to identify major common conflict roots so as to understand them better and to evolve mechanisms for a sustainable peace in Africa. This peace should be based on women's and men's participation in economic, cultural, political and social development;

- In hosting the conference, Rwanda wanted to share with other countries in Africa and in the whole world those lessons drawn from the 1994 genocide so that it doesn't reoccur anywhere else.

2. SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES

2.1. On 1st March 1997

2.1.1. Opening ceremony of the Conference

The official opening of the Conference was presided over by His Excellency Pasteur BIZIMUNGU, President of Rwanda, accompanied by the country's high tanking officials, namely the Vice President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court, Members of Parliament, Government officials and various other officials.

The opening ceremony was also blessed with the presence of several regional and international authorities, namely :

- Mrs Geraldine MOLEKETI, Minister for Social Affairs and Population Development in South Africa ;
- Mrs MBEKI, wife of the Vice President of the Republic of South Africa ;
- Mrs Gertrude MONGELA, Secretary General of the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995) ;
- Representatives from United Nations' Organisations ;
- Representatives from the Diplomatic Corps and International Organisations .

In this session five officials were introduced by the Steering Committee after which they gave their presentations.

- In her welcome speech, Mrs Aloysia INYUMBA, as chairperson of the Steering Committee and Minister of Family and Women in Development in Rwanda, welcomed the invited guests and thanked them for honouring their invitation.

For her, this Panafrican Conference should not only be seen as a follow-up to the Beijing Conference but also considered under the pertinent themes that deal with the African continent. There can be no peace or development without justice. She called on the Conference participants to stress the importance of bringing to book those genocide suspects still roaming all over the world.

Minister INYUMBA is convinced that indeed the root cause of conflicts and wars is bad governance and political bankruptcy. Therefore solutions will come from Africans themselves who have to take their destiny into their own hands. Women have the duty of saying no to political, social and economic exploitation of our people.

She briefly presented the doldrums of the tragedy lived up by Rwandan women during genocide and summarised their present situation. On the same occasion, she showed those new challenges emanating from the genocide phenomenon which should be faced if peace and development are to be reestablished in Rwanda. She also stressed that in the same framework, measures were taken to alleviate such problems. Thus peace initiatives and reconstruction activities were launched, legal reform actions on matrimonial systems, successions and grants were evolved in order to protect vulnerable groups and genocide survivors and through focal points set up in decision making instances, so that women who represent more than 60 % after genocide be integrated into the planning and development process. A fundamental law on genocide had been promulgated in order to prevent genocide from reoccurring and to put an end to the culture of impunity. To conclude, she expressed the wish that the Kigali Declaration be the spearhead for the implementation of the Beijing Plan of Action.

Following the welcome gesture by the Minister of Family and Women Promotion, His Excellency Pasteur BIZIMUNGU, the President of the Republic of Rwanda made his inaugural speech in which he noted the interdependence between peace, equality and complementarity between men and women and development. He stressed that lack of peace springs from political disorganisation, social and economic disorder and human rights' violation while all these factors are prerequisite to development.

Besides, in Rwanda like elsewhere in Africa, there cannot be any form of development as long as the role of women and their participation remain marginal. As women play an important role in production and stability, they deserve more attention so that they may integrate decision making and conflict resolution instances.

However, as President Pasteur BIZIMUNGU acknowledges, women's total emancipation in Africa is not easy because they have experienced several years of marginalisation after the colonial era. The conference had thus to formulate women liberation mechanisms and their effective integration in the development process. The President is of the view that, among other things pertinent policies have to be formulated in eradicating all forms of discrimination based on sex mostly within formal and informal educational institutions. Lastly, he wished the participants successful deliberations and effective resolutions.

- Mrs Geraldine MOLEKETI, South African Minister for Social Affairs and Population Development, on behalf of President Nelson MANDELA, in her speech, congratulated Rwanda for her efforts and sacrifices made to halt genocide and to set up a new Rwanda based on unity of all, reconstruction and justice.

  She mentioned those difficulties encountered in her own country in the ongoing process of unification and justice. She shared with the participants the efficiency shown by the " Truth and Reconciliation" Commission set up as a structure meant to contribute to the restoration of justice by fighting racism and other divisionisms. Such a structure allows to detect truth on the planning and implementation of criminal acts of social discrimination and extermination.

  Lastly, she stressed how similar the situations both in Rwanda and South Africa were in search for solutions to conflicts afflicting Africa, she called on all Africans' consciousness to unite with South Africa in promoting peace on the continent.

- The Executive Director of the United Nations' Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), Dr. NAFIS SADIK, stresses the importance of holding such a conference in Rwanda in the aftermath of genocide. She called on the responsibility for all to restore a sustainable peace. Rwanda can benefit from the the plan of action of the Conference in order to repair her social fabric.

  She stressed the importance of granting women the same rights as men so as to establish peace for all and by all. Rwanda has to make considerable efforts in ensuring the wellbeing and basic rights for all.
  Reproductive and sexual health have also to be taken into account because it contributes a lot to the social and moral wellbeing and reproduction of the population. Women die in thousands during pregnancy and after delivering, the infant mortality race is very high in Sub-Saharan Africa, lack of information and care are the major factors which impair the mother's health.

  Therefore reproductive health remains an incontrovertible priority.

- The OAU Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Pascal GAYAMA in his turn recalled the fact that 80 % of all refugees and persons in difficult situations were women and children. He too stressed that womenwere stabilisers of life and family in the community. Women's contribution was therefore important though often ignored.

The Chinese Women's Federation Representative, in her speech, congratulated Rwandan Government and women for their joint efforts in restoring peace and in Rwanda's reconciliation process. She expressed China's support to Rwanda and their promise to continue supporting her efforts in national reconstruction and reconciliation.

2.1.2. DELEGATIONS VISIT GENOCIDE SITES AT NYANZA AND NTARAMA

After genocide, Rwandans took up their country's reconstruction. Their first task was to bury their dead ones with dignity. In order not to let fall into oblivion those horrors lived up by Rwandans, 77 genocide memorial sites were preserved throughout the country. Two such sites were visited during the conference.

The Nyanza genocide site

At this site rest some 5.000 persons massacred by the INTERAHAMWE on 9th and 10th April 1994 soon after the departure of UNAMIR Belgian contingent who were protecting them. These persons who had taken refuge in the Kicukiro Technical School premises were led to their holocaust site, holed into one mass grave before being massacred with grenades and machetes.
Survivors of this genocide have filed a lawsuit against the Belgian contingent in UNAMIR for non assistance to endangered persons while they could do so.

The Ntarama genocide site

At this site, delegates were welcomed by Dr. Joseph NSENGIMANA, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Culture, who presented this site as one of the most significant for the country.

He recalled that more than one million persons were killed throughout the country within three months. This unbeatable record was minutely prepared. Indeed the coloniser through his policy of " divide and rule " had sown discord in the Rwandan people : the oddest being to make Rwandans feel they are neither equal, nor similar. To some, he endowed them with good qualities and to others, he developed an inferiority complex. The ensuing conflicts recorded since 1959 are nothing but a logical consequence of such a state of mind.

The Minister addressed the visitors of the Bugesera localCommunity. This area was inhabited since 1959 by exiled people from all over the country who were targeted whenever there was political unrest in the country in 1963,1966,1973 which culminated in the 1994 ugly incident.
The Ntarama site alone had witnessed more than five thousand victims comprising women and children who were massacred in a small country church. This was on 15th April 1994.

The Minister also talked of the Government decision to make memorials the best tool to strongly build the country's culture. He concluded by inviting the guests to tour the victims' remains which are going to be preserved as long as possible in order not to forget such a past.

After the laying wreaths of flowers on the victims' remains by various heads of delegations, a woman survivor of Ntarama made the following moving testimony:
It was on 8th April 1994, in the morning. Some men had climbed on hills or disappeared in the marshland to organise some resistance while women and children came to Ntarama: they holed up into this small church, the church yard and the kitchen.
I was in the church and it was announced outside :
"I want the Bahutu to separate from the Batutsi and to report here with their identity cards in their hands". As said, this was done and then militiamen started their evil works : with their nail hammers, they clubbed people. I shammed dead and cadavers' pieces were piled on me. That is how I was saved. Those who were then outside took refuge in the marshland valleys where there were papyrus covers. I could not reach there as there was a risk of my baby crying.

I moved out of the church and very furtively I went to hide in a shrub nearby. The following day, six vehicles brought from Kigali presidential guard soldiers. They thoroughly searched the area and killings reached their apex on 30 April 1994. I was discovered in my hinding. I pretended I was a hutu woman but militiamen retorted that Bahutu were with them at the front. They beat me with several machete strokes all over and rushed to massacre others. They were mistaking me for dead and I was saved again. What we witnessed as horrors goes beyond my understanding. It was exactly on 11th May 1994 that our liberators led us out of the papyrus marshland where I had managed to join a few others".

2.1.3. Visit and official inauguration of the " NELSON MANDELA" Peace Village at NTARAMA.

After the visit to the Ntarama genocide site, in turn came the visit of the " Nelson MANDELA" peace village. The welcome was marked with traditional dances by the inhabitants of the Kanzenze Commune followed by a programme presentation made by Mrs Immaculate MUGABO, the legal secretary of ASOFERWA, an organisation which had started this village.

The Burgomaster of the Kanzenze Commune spoke then to welcome the officials and to thank the different partners who financially made this action a reality. He emphasised the importance of this village where widows, orphans and other victims who had survived genocide are sheltered. He called on the delegates to do their utmost to help the village residents and on the latter to do their best in fulfilling what the dead ones would have wished them to do.

The following speech was made by Mrs Jeannette KAGAME, the Patron of ASOFERWA association. She presented the village and justified its naming after Nelson MANDELA who is a man of peace for which he struggled and suffered.

In this village are found not only residential houses but also a nutrition centre, a health centre and schools. She thanked all those who contributed to the peace village identification like the Chinese Government, WHO and UNESCO. In conclusion, she officially inaugurated the " NELSON MANDELA " peace village.

Mrs Francine FOURNIER who represented the UNESCO Director General mostly congratulated Rwandan women who did not wait for external assistance to start helping themselves out of the mess. She commended these women's courage in facing such hard conditions in which they had worked.

Mrs Beatrice UMUBYEYI, Chairperson of Pro-Femmes/TWESE HAMWE, thanked, on behalf of all Rwandan women, the UNESCO Director General for the award his institution had given to the joint Women Promotion Organisations in Rwanda (Pro-Femmes/TWESE HAMWE). She said this award was a strong support and an encouragement to the Rwandan women's efforts as witnesses of the misery known to their brothers and sisters.

What took place in Rwanda, she added, can occur elsewhere if no appropriate measures are taken in time as now Africa has many hot spots likely to catch fire. Therefore the tolerance award is a symbol of what is to be done. She renewed her thanks to Mrs FOURNIER and to the UNESCO Director General.

The concluding speech was made by Mrs Geraldine FRASER-MOLEKETI. She read President Nelson MANDELA's message in which the South African President expresses his sharing the pains Rwandans had undergone. Even his "imprisonment for 27 years is nothing against the Rwandan martyrdom", he said.

He wished that in this village be sown unity seeds and that in future cultural diversities be no more a tool for division but for communion. This village as a symbol of unity should be a starting point for reconstruction, freedom of movement and actions to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and children.

This village should contribute to healing wounds and serve as a model for the restoration of social justice so as to allow everybody to develop strategies aimed at breaking out the violent vicious circle.

2.1.4 A cultural evening show

Activities of the first day were concluded by a cultural evening show entitled " Time for peace " and put under the patronage of Mrs Seraphine BIZIMUNGU, the wife of the Head of State.

In her address, she expressed her interest and pleasure to welcome the participants to the conference and thanked them for their coming to the country of a thousand hills.

She remarked that the problems of peace, gender equality and development concerned the whole society. In order for women to take part in it, there is need for their training; education and other means likely to energize other sectors of activity such as health, environment management, science and technology, search for peace, formulation of sound policies which are seriously missing in developing countries but which are nonetheless prerequisite to every independence and autonomy.

She portrayed the woman as a spouse , a mother, educator and guardian of values in Africa countries as the centre of the peace and development process firstly in her own home, then in her community and among nations. She lastly emphasised the importance of culture in strengthening peace, equality and development.

Cultural troupes from various areas of the country and representative of diverse classes of people made the evening merry. The conference themes were recalled and expanded in several songs alternating with dances from different country areas. With the closing song " Africa, Liberty ", everybody present took up the floor to dance and so show his/her confidence and hope.

2.2. On 02 March 1997

Activities of this sessions were presided over by Mrs Aloysia INYUMBA, Rwanda's Minister for Family and Women in Development. The day started with addresses by the invited guests present. Then themes were presented before group discussions were held on the same topics.

2.2.1. Speeches by Guests of Honour

- Mrs Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF, Secretary General of UNDP Africa, greeted the assistance in the name of peace and the memory of the illustrious persons who had disappeared during genocide. She also commended Rwandans in general and Rwandan women in particular for their efforts in reconstructing their country and putting in place those mechanisms meant to restore the peace process.
  She also acknowledged that Rwanda had much more to do in detecting the root causes of the genocide and in looking for ways and means to eradicate all factors contributing to disturbing peace (than lamenting the past).

  She again stressed the fact that women had presently many opportunities to make fundamental changes and hoped that they would influence the leadership in fostering positive social changes. These would take place through women's participation at all levels of decision making.

  For her, this conference was an occasion for Rwanda to make concrete the Beijing recommendations and she hoped that it would end up with a plan of action that will strengthen the implementation of its platforms for action.

  In her speech, the Ugandan Vice-President, Mrs Speciosa KAZIBWE, stressed the fact that Africa in general is experiencing the fate of people locked up in a cage. She refered to animals locked up (in a cage) without food and which are forced to eat one another. Therefore if Africa does not work unceasingly at solving her own problems of hunger, poverty, basic infrastructure, information and communication, her fate would not be different from the one of those animals locked up in a cage.

As Africa is a young continent, it was necessary to include the youth in her building up. Good governance and participatory democracy are prerequisite and culture has an important role to play (in this endeavour).

She called on women to liberate themselves as nobody else would do it in their place. They should not beg to be associates or included in project-programmes but have rather to demand to work as equal partners side by side with men. To that end several initiatives are to be taken and women have to open up markets, to integrate technologies and to exchange experiences with others in strengthening their capacities and effective participation to all development processes.

Women liberation cannot be secured but by women. Women participation in decision making revolves on power struggle and affirmative actions are not enough.

Those women with access to decision making instances have to be unmarked because of the difference they bring in it and by those tangible results they produce at their basic community level. They have to offer a global vision and be concrete in implementing progress at home within their basic community. We have to think globally and to act locally. Women must serve as agents of change. She said that in Uganda, women were sharing in power at 30 %.

- Mrs Mary ROBINSON, President of Ireland, who was the first Head of State to visit Rwanda soon after genocide, took up the floor. She expressed her joy to take up the occasion offered her to attend the conference, which, in her opinion, was very important because it was for Rwanda, an opportunity to analyse together with other countries her post genocide problems and to enhance the role of women in the country's reconstruction and peace restoration. She stressed the fact that the conflict issue was paramount so as to prevent the discrimination and the oppression of some social groups.

She underscored the paradox of the attention given by the international community to human rights violation on one hand and their inability to act accordingly on the other. She therefore stressed that such basic actions as taken by Pro-Femmes/TWESE HAMWE were essential.
She denounced poverty as the worst enemy to wellbeing and a challenge for all development. It is therefore necessary to reinforce social initiatives in this field. The country's social and economic activities should be integrated within the subregional and regional structures.

Mechanisms of a wider partnership should be expanded so as to foster exchanges of products and information in which women have to be seriously involved. To this end, women must be sensitized and mobilised for actions.

Strengthening women's capacities is a process towards peace. Women should not serve as decoration in development but rather be at the centre of all the country's development sectors.

It is necessary to fight in order to have enough women in the decision making organs so as to make a difference. Women must influence the programme of discussions and the gender aspect must show up in politics. The governance made by women should make a difference with the men's mode of governance through more open structures, more participatory and more responsive to everybody.
To this end, it is necessary to instil confidence in women. They can make a difference and these four years before a new millennium now offer more opportunities than the whole century.

2.2.2. Papers presented by Speakers

2.2.2.1. Theme one : Historical Background

A. Critical events in Rwanda's history

This theme was presented by Mr Gamaliel MBONIMANA, a lecturer at Rwanda's National University. In his presentation, he explains that since November 1959, Rwanda was a stage for torture, massacres and the exile of the Tutsi ; the climax of which was reached in genocide from 6 April to 4 July 1994 with its toll of more than one million Rwandans.

Several writers want to explain this tragedy in the context of the Rwanda's population settlements and by biological or even psychological differences between Hutu and Tutsi. The former would have for more than four centuries served under the harsh domination of the latter considered as invaders. Such a presentation which puts a direct link between the 1994 genocide and what would have taken place before colonisation is nothing but an historical falsification.

Precolonial Rwanda under the aegis of the monarchy was by then a nation-state made up of several autonomous kingships. Its characteristics were national unity, social concord and administrative diversity. The Rwandan people is then made of Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa who speak one same language, worship one same God and share one same geographical area. The social fabric rested on interpenetrating and diversified lineages and clans. It is important to underline the fact that some members of the three social classes belong to the same clan. Without denying some peculiarities and contradictions such as dynastical rivalries, interclanic conflicts and intrigues, relations between Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa were ruled by solidarity links.

The speaker underlined further that women were playing an important role in the country's leadership as power was bicephalous. Like men, women took part into wars of conquest and actions of liberation. Women were also the foundation of social cohesion and unity between the various social classes through marriage links or clandestine associations.

The colonial period came to upset social relations between Rwandan peoples and to put up an ethnic hierarchy which was to lead to catastrophic consequences in the country's future. This period is characterised by several disciriminatory forms and social and political injustice.
As an example, compulsory identity cards were then made to mention hutu, tutsi or twa, the identification criterion being the number of cattle owned. Thus a Muhutu could have a Mututsi as his/her father or else children of one same father could belong to different "ethnic" groups.

Furthermore, the imposed ideology of Batutsi being superior to Bahutu as propagated mostly through education takes then roots. It is to be noted that Belgian colonialists had set up schools for children of chiefs then assimilated to Batutsi while Bahutu were only admitted into seminaries. This discrimination extends to employment. Administrative reforms on which the exclusion of Bahutu in the country's administration is based, are then carried out. This period is also marked by the descrimination against women in education and public service.

The change of attitude by colonialists who later on sided with the Bahutu to face the nascent nationalist movement from the Tutsi elite is a good illustration for the colonial policy of "divide and rule". Soon after, in 1958/59, antagonisms about ethnic issues broke up. The 1959 massacres forced many Batutsi to flee abroad.

In 1962, the country recovers her independence under the domination of the MDR-Parmehutu Party (Democratic and Republican Movement) with its discriminatory bias. All the years after, new massacres of Batutsi take place, as well as physical elimination of inside opponents. Such total liquidation of opponents deprives the country of political leaders with far-reaching vision and experience. From early 1973, new massacres, looting and arsons take place with the Batutsi being both the target and the victims. Under the Habyarimana regime (1973-1994), the gap existing between Batutsi and Bahutu is widening because of the so-called ethnical and regional equilibrium policy applied notably at school and in the public service. The first two republics instilled into the population a philosophy of hatred among the various components of the Rwandan society.

The root causes of genocide are therefore as much political, social and economic as cultural. From a cultural point of view, cultural uprooting takes place following contacts made with a new culture carried by the Christian religion.

Then the Church went out to eradicate all customs including (social) interdicts and taboos from which follows a loss of sense of values such as the meaning of curse, solidarity and respect for human life. That is how one is confronted with a society with no valuable reference, i.e. a misguided society. Furthermore, the MRND - regime (National Revolutionary Movement for Development), a party state, led all Rwandans, men and women, into obscurantism, mediocrity and ignorance. It is then in such a context that genocide took place.

The historical reality so painted shows then that the (alleged) atavic hatred between Bahutu and Batutsi must be put aside while the impact exerted by colonisation and discrimination on social and political transformations has to be stressed. A culture of division and hatred was reigning from 1990 to 1994 before culminating into the genocide and massacres we know to-day.

The Rwandan people still hope to rebuild itself insofar as it can count on international cooperation to solve some of the many problems the country is facing. Lastly all Rwandans must assume their history with courage so as to move out of the Hutu-Tutsi dungeon and enjoy together the broad day light in modern civilisation.

B. Critical events in African History

The presentation made by Dr TAJUDEEN ABDUL-RAHEEN, Chairman of the Panafrican Movement, examines African conflicts within an historical perspective. He starts by remarking that African history is complex but could be subdivided into roughly three major eras, namely precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods.

He then earmarks the need to take a closer look at our own history in order to solve the many problems facing Africa to-day. He warns against glorifying the past and not recognizing those contradictions existing within African precolonial societies. True, colonisation exacerbated and reinforced contradictions and injustice within those societies and used them to serve its own interests.

The first and most devastating problem for the African continent was enslavement and slave trade. This phenomenon was followed by problems resulting from colonisation including the setting up of artificial boundaries which take no account of African cultures, traditions, languages or needs, then the imposed foreign languages which to-day still divide Africans as anglophone and francophone, etc.. , imposed foreign domination to Africa by using those less patriotic elements within the African societies to subjugate their own peoples; the cultural alienation of the African elite which were to seize power in the newly independent African countries.

Liberation wars conducted in several African countries like Kenya, Algeria, Cameroon and independence was generally preceded by the use of force from African patriots. It is within this context that independence was secured : a context of bloody fights, distress, cultural alienation and manipulation by colonial powers of new states so as to perpetuate foreign domination. Power structure and economic relations between those new states and their former colonial powers remained much the same though they were this time managed by the educated African elite.

In a good number of countries, radical nationalists have managed to seize power - as was the case in Ghana, Algeria and Mali - but military coups d'état installed soon after into power neocolonialist forces.

Then came the cold war between East and West and the alignment of the so-called non-aligned countries with one or the other of these blocks in order to secure their protection . "That is how we became pro-West or pro-East instead of being pro-Africa", Tajudeen clarified.

We do accept dictators and genocide suspects into our countries even when they are being chased away by their own people and we negotiate with them and we even do accept them into our governments so as to have peace. Consequences of colonisation are still here to be seen. In moving from Eastern to Western Africa, one goes via Europe. We in Africa are still tearing up each other and dividing where elsewhere people are gathering to make up bigger markets.

Like all other African countries, Rwanda found herself locked up in this super powers'struggle. She was often said to be a haven of peace and stability because of the support she had from her protectors. The struggle of the Rwandan people to decide their own destiny was marred into violence since 1959 up to the 1994 genocide. Colonial racist Anthropology was then used to distract the world attention from the people's just cause. Problems are seen to-day in terms of ethnic majority and minority but not in terms of their legitimacy. The policy of non-interference in the affairs of a sovereign state as claimed by the OAU was used to perpetuate dictatorships and in this, Rwanda was no exception. The Rwandan dictatorship could not crumble but in a blood bath.

C. Lessons to learn from Rwanda

History of conflicts in Africa, in general and of the struggle for the liberation of Rwanda in particular, offers a good number of lessons, among them being :

1° No force can in the long run overcome people who fight for a just cause ;
2° Commitment to a cause is the most important guarantee for the success of that cause ;
3° The response by the international community and by the United Nations to crises taking place in various countries must be appropriate and come at the right time:
4° African solutions must be found in resolving African problems and the OAU must act more decisively against threats thrown to the life of people in African countries ;
5° There is need of putting in place and/or strengthening a popular diplomacy in order to assist other Africans in need ;
6° Those responsible of genocide must be tried and punished in the shortest time possible so as to ease the country's progress.

The discussion following the presentation stressed the necessity of a conciliatory approach to crises in various African countries. It is sometimes necessary to reconcile and to work together with the former enemy in national interest.

Some recommendations :

1° Justice has to be done by trying those responsible of genocide and other war crimes in Africa ;
2° The OAU and the International Community must act at the right time in order to save human lives ;
3° Means and ways are to be found to allow peoples and parties which were in conflict to live in peace together. It is important to allow various groups to reach a compromise without winners or losers and so help the reconciliation process in the country and assist people to rehabilitate and rebuild their communities.

2.2.2.2. Theme Two : Gender, Peace and Development : essential links for progress

Two speakers tackled this theme, namely Mrs Winnie BYANYIMA, a Member of the Ugandan Parliament and Mrs Elisabeth KHARONO, Coordinator of the Eastern African Subregional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women, based in Kampala, Uganda. From their complementary presentations, the following main tenets were retained.

Concerning definitions given for peace and development as well as for their interaction dynamics, it was noted that it was not enough to condemn wholesome all forms of violence, without distinction between oppressor and oppressed and by squarely ignoring structural violence. Indeed in some African countries, we witness such an imposed peace as was the case in Rwanda before genocide. People were living in fear, intimidated, humiliated, corrupted and powerless. Various regimes under African dictators indeed oppress people in a fake peace, they make them suffer hunger, diseases and all forms of sufferings. The population is kept away from control of means of production and decision making, which determine its fate.
However this does not appear generally as a threat to the security for political leaders who have other priorities than development which is required in order to overcome structural violence.

Peace is to be understood as a situation in which all people have equal access to economic and social amenities and to the whole range of human rights and fundamental freedoms and in which environment protection is assured.

Peace has to be seen at all levels, individual, family level, community level and among nations. Conflicts generally come from the struggle for power conquest and physical and ideological domination as well as for the control of resources, be it at family level where the husband is the authority and the wife the subordinate ; at community or national level where one group dominates another or else among states and great powers.

A specific feature of conflicts and wars is their impact which is disproportionate to the lives of women and children. In the course of confrontation, people are killed, people's lives disturbed, access to basic social services interrupted, scarce human, financial and physical resources used to acquire and service the death and destruction machinery, girls and women often raped, tortured and abused, children abandoned, etc.. . In such a context of chaos and troubles, women are forced to take up roles of support, body and heart relief in all sufferings in order to preserve human dignity and to restore social order.

As concerns gender and development, identified were the influence from a patriarchal culture and the ideology of war mongering and deplored was the increasing poverty of the African women. The developed path followed so far has only marginalised women without always taking into account the quality of life. Poverty is undermining all efforts towards democracy; social justice and development. It is sapping efforts and actions undertaken to fight for peace and gender equality.

Africans have the duty of finding solutions for the continent. It is obvious that in all our societies, there were methods and traditional practices used to prevent or resolve conflicts. Research will be needed on this topic in order to benefit from this knowledge in education programmes for peace. Attention will however be paid to gender issues so as not to further marginalise women in such systems.

Women must play an important role as pillars, not of destruction and violence but of support and preservation of life. Indeed in their daily life, women carry and enhance life, educate children, care for vulnerable persons (old, handicapped, etc).

Through their productive activities, they maintain families and communities. This is an important contribution women may bring to the public life and a strong voice in favour of peace and reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and a condemnation of war and violence. Women embody such values as compassion, sensitivity, negotiation, non-violence, tolerance, competition, forgiveness, etc.. .

2.2.2.3. Theme three : Effective Partnership to promote a peace culture

Two speakers tackled this theme, namely Mr Pascal GAYAMA, OAU Deputy Secretary General and Dr. Jacqueline ADHIAMBO ODUOL, lecturer at the American University in Kenya.
Mr GAYAMA announced the setting up of a women's committee for peace. The OAU had already informed Governments of this process and is awaiting their countries' designation of delegates to this committee. He wondered whether it was not more opportune to use existing mechanisms to promote peace rather than putting up parallel structures which do not necessarily have the capacity of solving those problems for which they were put in place.

Dr. ODUOL, on her side, declared that men's and women's peace initiatives and mechanisms cannot produce the expected results and influence changes within the culture of violence and hatred but where the main actors - governments and civil society, private sector, international community and media - embody a common vision of peace programmes. The various national and international partners must formulate clear policies, make adequate budget allocations and have the required institutional mechanisms in order to implement these policies. That is how women will take part on equal footing with men in identifying priorities in matters of development and peace promotion. Those partners have also the duty of using their respective powers to translate into actions the recommendations made at the World Platform on Women and Peace as well as international declarations and policies for peace promotion and maintenance so as to consolidate and improve upon the promotion of a peace culture.

Till now women did not pay much attention to any approach on how to influence the political agenda. They often work without clear objectives, where they would better analyse their opponents' strength as warlords do before setting precise goals and mobilizing consequently the required means.

Another collective responsibility for all the various groups is to make concrete the gender equality by translating the formal gender equality into a substantive one by undertaking, among others. affirmative actions meant to revigorate women's power and autonomy.

An adequate number of women is required in various structures so as to make an adequate impact on political agenda and decisions as well as on political culture and the style of decision-making. This is also required for women to appear in conflict prevention structures. There is need to formulate strategies on how to exert an adequate impact on power but also on how to use power as women. Diversified strategies concerning government, civil society, private sector, international community and media were proposed.

2.2.3 WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

Workshops were organised into four groups to deal with the following issues :

1° Putting in place justice and setting up a peace culture.
2° Economic strength for a sustainable peace.
3° Effective partnership for peace, gender equality and development.
4° Peace mechanisms for gender efficiency and awareness.

2.2.3.1. Group one : strengthening justice and a peace culture.

This group discussion aimed at clarifying the fact that violence is not an appropriate answer for real or imaginary interests and that a culture of peace must be based on justice and tolerance.

Education and information sharing are essential in setting up and strengthening a culture of peace. Till now the trend has been to talk conflicts'effects but not their root causes. These may include, among others, social injustices, political unfairness, inequitable resource distribution and violation of citizenry rights. Similarly, women's rights at legal, political, social and economic levels must be recognized. In order to change the current situation in Africa, Africans must themselves bring up a culture of peace where individual and women's rights are recognized and which would also be a culture of tolerance and compassion.

This group recommends therefore :
- suppression of discrimination laws ;
- formulation of laws favouring gender equality ;

- initiating cooperation among various Ministries of Justice in Africa ;
- involving women in law reform process ;
- review and reinforcement of existing legal mechanisms such as the International Penal Tribunal for Rwanda (IPTR) ;
- promotion of a global agreement for extradition of persons accused of crimes against humanity so that no country becomes their peace haven.

2.2.3.2. Group Two : Economic power and sustainable peace

This group discussed the issue of the heavy debt burden African countries are forced to carry and which is, among others, the result of untimely policies imported from outside and massive arms' sales. A debt relief in the form of cancellation would allow African countries to relaunch their economies.

Resources so generated would be channelled towards programmes in favour of the poor and women. For Rwanda's case, the debt should simply be cancelled. The group made the following recommendations :

*** Access to credit** :

Policies and strategies should aim at granting such microcredits and services as to ensure training, technology transfer and market identification. Resource mobilisation through saving and credit schemes should be encouraged.

*** Access to property :**

Policies and strategies should aim at women's greater participation in the economy. This supposes some assistance to strengthen their participation beyond the informal sector and small businesses. Governments ought to formulate promotion mechanisms for women's participation in public or private enterprises through privatisation and other means.

*** Access to land** :

Countries should adopt land reform policies and strategies aimed at extending land property to women. In other words, collective land exploitation should be taken into consideration for such countries as Rwanda so as to ease the reintegration of refugees and the return of people. All the plots should be demined in those countries which were till recent engaged in conflicts.

*** Official Assistance for Development** :

The declining official aid and the announced suppression of advantageous provisions in favour of the Least Advanced Countries by the Lomé Convention is of greatest concern. Africa's partners should continue granting financial assistance to those countries and so mainly with aid destined for women. The official assistance to development should be maintained.

*** Regional Cooperation :**

Governments should consider adopting measures aimed at eliminating constraints so as to widen women's intervention in business.

*** Information and communication :**

Policies and strategies should support those networks which favour information exchanges among women, including those strategies which allow women to enter the technological era.

*** Gender systematisation** :

Countries should adopt measures aimed at initiating data which is detailed and classified by gender so as to ease the formulation of policies meant to integrate gender in all sectors of life.

*** Sanctions against Burundi :**

Participants proposed that a mission of eminent women visits Burundi to study on spot the impact of the embargo on the economy and its incidents on women's initiatives. This mission would the make recommendations to African Heads of State and Government for an appropriate action.

2.2.3.3. Group three : Real Partnership for Peace, Gender equality and Development

This group discussed partnership and talked, among others, of the OAU women's mechanism - African Women's Committee for Peace - which, once operational, will allow to realise a women's perspective in conflict prevention and peaceful resolution.

Partnership would also allow to regroup organisations and institutions dealing with women so as to avoid energy dispersion, useless competition and to encourage such organisations in more team work. Such partnership would start at grassroots level with rural women groups, the youth, local NGO's; national NGO's and so reach the regional and international levels.

This group made the following recommendations :

- Strengthening partnership at all levels of political and administrative life ;
- Increasing communication and information exchange ; stimulating media's interest for actions in favour of peace, gender equality and development;
- Enhancing training of both men and women in defending a culture of peace and protection of human rights;
- Putting in place an operational structure in order to make a follow up on implementation of the plan of action and to mobilize funds in Kigali;
- Identifying women's common goals and using the acquired experience within regional and international institutions by some African women to benefit all others;
- Integrating all the existing mechanisms so as to play an active role in formulating programmes;
- Enhancing freedom of trade and of movement for women within conflict and border areas;
- Promoting partnership at family level including children and the community;
- Enhancing women's participation in conflict resolution ;
- Encouraging women with conflict experience to become peace activists;
- Inducing donors and international organisations to favour African experts' exchange and participation;
- Setting up a data bank on existing institutions with their various fields of activity.

2.2.3.4. Group Four : Peace mechanisms for gender efficiency and awareness

This group talked of the experiences gained by peace movements in various African countries such as Somalia, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Burundi and Rwanda. Women's movements for peace have shown exceptional courage in the struggle to end armed conflicts. These movements' efforts should serve as an inspiration to other countries threatened with conflicts.

Particularly, the Federation of Women's Movements for Peace which had just been launched should find inspiration in efforts made in various African countries within the peace process.

This group made the following recommendations :

- To make women's initiatives for peace more visible and effective. This will be done through the launching of a Federation of all African Women's Networks to promote peace, by enhancing the exchange of information and experiences through newsletters, by setting up a computerised network etc. and implementing training programmes for women for peace.

- To build African institutions for peace promotion. To this end, there is need to enhance research and documentation on women's realisations within peace maintenance and to make up data banks and to sensitize the existing ones over their role in peace maintenance. Further, it is necessary to launch and consolidate community initiatives for peace and to promote formal and informal education for peace.

- To utilise African resources and competence in the peace process. By setting up computerised network for peace, training women's media associations and other partners within reports on peace in an African perspective and by setting up mechanisms to support peace efforts at national level and by using radio and vernacular languages to promote education on peace.

- To promote women as ambassadors of peace. To this end, there is need to identify eminent women for peace promotion, to request the Federation of African Women's Networks for peace to submit names of eminent women to OAU to be included in the African Women's Committee for Peace and to set up a network for Parliamentarian Women. Obviously all this is materialised through making visits to countries found in conflict.

- To empower women in the fields of politics and decision making for promotion of peace. By making an affirmative action (e.g. through quotas) in local, national, regional and international working for peace, by strengthening women's professional capacity in the field of peace and by supporting women's struggle for peace and gender equality, women's empowerment will be enhanced.

- To develop local initiatives and a culture of peace. To this end, it is convenient to identify community initiatives for peace, to rekindle traditional knowledge and mechanisms for conflict resolution in order to make them gender sensitive and to enhance education for peace at community level and also to promote women's efforts for peace in the public.

- To set up a trust fund within the OAU. By exerting pressure on Governments to honour their own commitments and to mobilise resources for peace.

- To set up a Panafrican fund for the victims of genocide in Rwanda. This is to be done by this Conference launching the fund through a fundraising at its closing ceremony, delegating Ministers of Family and in development as interim trustees of the fund, appointing managers of the fund in charge of formulating its management terms and by having other recommendations relating to the fund finalised by a voluntary committee before the end of the Conference.

2.3. On 03 March 1997

On the third day, the working groups reported their results and recommendations to the Plenary Session for their discussions and amendments. Basing upon these items information, a Plan of Action and a Kigali Declaration were prepared. The reading of this plan of action and the declaration came at the closing ceremony at which a symbolic piecing together of a torn Africa was performed. The Conference was officially closed by a speech read by the Prime Minister of Rwanda.

2.3.1. The plenary session

At this plenary session presided over by Mrs Geraldine MOLEKETI, South African Minister of Social Affairs and Population Development, working groups presented first a summary of their discussions held on the day before as well as their recommendations.
Participants then discussed the main features of recommendations made by guest speakers and committees before framing a Plan of Action and a Kigali Declaration. Basing on the discussions and various contributions made, one group finalised the Plan of Action and another one, the Kigali Declaration.

The Plan of Action first underlines that human progress and development cannot be there without peace and gender equality.

This consensus is well articulated in the women's World Platform for Action which drew inspiration, among others, from the African Platform for Action. This Panafrican Conference on « Peace, Gender and Development » is the first one since the Beijing Conference was held. It is therefore an important step in implementing those principles found in the African and World Platforms. By its holding in Rwanda and being inspired by Rwandan women, this conference is a benchmark in the painful movement from the 1994 genocide towards the present efforts for healing, peace building and women empowerment for without their active participation and integration of their different perspectives, the aims of peace, gender equality and development could not be realised.

2.3.2. The closing ceremony

The closing ceremony was presided over by the Right Honourable Pierre Celestin RWIGEMA, Rwanda's Prime Minister.

After presentation of the main tenets of the « Plan of Action for Conflict-affected areas » by Mrs Geraldine MOLEKETI, participants agreed to appoint a working group for its detailed formulation and then Mrs Aloysia INYUMBA read the Kigali Declaration on behalf of all the participants.
A cotton-made and torn map of Africa prepared by Mrs Mariam MAIGA was pieced together again by several important African women present.

Mrs NETUMBO NDA TIWAH thanked then the Conference Organisers and the Rwanda Government on behalf of all the participants. The success and the fruitful results of this Conference are mostly owed to their commitment and devotion.

The Right Honourable Pierre Celestin RWIGEMA, Rwanda's Prime Minister made his speech in which he congratulated participants in general and African women in particular for having been the first ones to hold a follow up conference on Beijing Conference recommendations on the theme of « Peace, Gender and Development ». He also thanked the participating women for braving the excessive mediatisation over insecurity situation in Rwanda.

The Rwandan people is busy and eager to rebuild a society based on justice and democracy following the terrible events from 1990 to 1994. The Rwandan society is still traumatised by genocide. People and, particularly so, women and children have experienced terrible acts where some were forced to attend to their wives, daughters, mothers being raped or their relatives wiped out.

Regrettably Rwanda is not alone in her case of conflict. We indeed are witnessing the multiplication of areas of conflict and violence in our region and over the continent. Such are the Great Lakes'region, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, etc... . These conflicts slow down development, increase poverty and therefore insecurity. Women and children are the most affected in such conflicts.

The OAU initiative on implementing a mechanism for conflict prevention and resolution becomes more urgent together with the commendable initiatives by women which are now manifest in the field.

Equality between men and women is important and the mechanisms proposed by the participants to effect this equality are most pertinent. Women's contribution in all fields and in particular in economy should be recognised. Their contribution in agricultural production is greater than men's. In post-genocide Rwanda, women are forced to take part into all fields because they make up the bigger majority of the population. However, their participation in the modern sectors of the economy is handicapped by a good number of factors of which are lack of formal education, some social and cultural practices, poverty and some laws which are obsolete and discriminatory.

It is therefore important and urgent to find means and ways to overcome those obstacles. Rwanda Government through its Ministry of Family and Women in Development, has already launched a process to review the Rwandan Laws wherever they disfavour women as well as to change such social and cultural traditions which inhibit women's development. The Prime Minister called on other African countries to do their utmost to effect gender equality, especially in the fields of education and women's participation in decision-making instances.

However all these efforts will not bear fruits but in a climate of peace and in a social order which gives way to all men's and women's energy and potentiality. Justice and reconciliation for all Rwandans are a priority.

The Rwandan Government calls therefore for the international community's support, particularly African countries represented at this Conference to arrest the genocide leaders and try them before Rwandan courts of law or the International Penal Tribunal for Rwanda (PT) based in Arusha, Tanzania.

The Prime Minister commended all the participants for their contribution to the Conference's success, for their new and constructive ideas presented in making concrete peace, gender equality and development, and mostly for having made formulated a concise Plan of Action and a Kigali Declaration to inspire their future actions.

He also commended the guest speakers and the organisers for having made the conference lively. Rwanda Government and all other African leaders will, he hoped, do their utmost to implement the Kigali Plan of Action. After wishing a happy return home to all the participants, the Prime Minister declared closed the works of the Panafrican Conference on « Peace, Gender and Development ».

KIGALI DECLARATION

ON PEACE, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

We the Women of Africa meeting in Kigali, Rwanda on 03 March 1997 at the Panafrican Conference on Gender, Peace and Development,

Recalling the Kampala Declaration on Peace, the African and global Platforms of Action and the resolutions of the Johannesburg Women leadership Forum on Peace,

Concerned about continued internal armed conflicts on the continent and in the Great Lakes regions in particular and the consequences of war on the lives of ordinary people especially women and children.

Mindful of the recent genocide in Rwanda which is as scar on the African conscience and an experience never to be repeated on the continent but **encouraged** by the efforts of reconstruction in post-genocide Rwanda,

Noting with great concern African women's lack of awareness of their civic and human rights,

Determined to contribute to conflict prevention and conflict resolution in Africa by introducing our perspectives, priorities and culture to all peace-making initiatives.

DO DECLARE THAT

Peace is a pre-requisite to Development
We **commit** ourselves to the prevention and peaceful-resolution of conflicts on our continent.

We **demand** our government recognition of women's traditional peace-making roles and their rights to equal involvement in all paece initiatives including early warning mechanisms and swift responses at national, regional and international levels.

We **urge** the Secretary General of the OUA to accelerate establishment of the African. Women Committee on Peace (AWCP) and ask our governments to give fulle support to the process.

We **encourage** Governments and NGOs and International Organisations to develop and increase civic and human rights education programmes for grassroots women.

We **affirm** that peace can only be built on equality and freedom from injustice.

We **urge** African Governments to adhere to the rule of law and enforce respect for human and women's rights.

We **call upon** the OAU and UN to establish a **compensation fund** for the victims of genocide in Rwanda. And ask all governments to cooperate in bringing the perpetrators of genocide to justice.

We **urge** the UN particularly the UNDP to assist in organisation an immediate mission of eminent women to Burundi in order to support women's initiatives for peace and to examine the effects of the embargo on the people of Burundi and provide informed recommendations.

We request the OAU and ECA to follow up implementation of the Kigali Plan of Action including mobilising resources for its realisations.

We commit ouselves to establishing and strenghening partnerships of men and women, Government, media NGOs and the private sector for in our countries.

Poverty and ignorance are major sources of conflicts.

We **urge** our Government and the International Community to give priority to poverty eradication policies and programmes which foster the economic empowerment and advancement of women.

Kigali, 3rd March 1997

3. A PLAN OF ACTION FOR CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS.

When the African countries liberated themselves from the colonial yoke, their peoples had high hopes they could then turn their attention to the urgent problems of development.

However very quickly their hopes vanished in front of those conflicts and crises which to-day characterise most of their societies.

As women had constantly invested themselves in consistent liberation struggles, they were particularly deceived to realise that their visions of society could not materialise without causing further sacrifice.

They envisaged a continent where people could live in peace, security and stability with men and women working together for the development of their countries.

As a result of their unceasing efforts over several years of struggle, there is to-day an overall consensus that human progress and development cannot be attained without peace and gender equality. This consensus was eloquently and comprehensively articulated in the World Platform for Action in which the African contribution was sizeable.

The Panafrican Conference on Peace, Gender and Development which was held in Kigali, Rwanda is therefore another significant step in keeping high the spirit of Beijing in order to move forwards in implementing those African and World Platforms of Action.

Women's vision of Peace recognises that " peace does not only mean lack of war, violence and hostilities, but rather is a situation whereby everybody has equal chances to attain social and economic justice, all human rights and basic freedoms in an environment with an assured safety".

For being organised and inspired by Rwandan women, this conference is a critical mark in the sorrowfull passing from the 1994 genocide to the present efforts in consoling, peace building and women promotion .
We, the delegates at this conference, aware that African women need to see practical actions being undertaken without delay to foster unity and promote sustainable peace, we do hereby commit ourselves to use this Plan of Action in

fulfilling the aims and objectives of gender equality, peace and development by paying particular attention to conflict-affected territories in Africa.

To make justice and a culture of peace.

The main objective is to enhance efforts to build up societies based on justice and the rule of law. The foundation for these societies should consist in promotion and protection of human rights for all.

Justice

Actions proposed:

1. Legal reform

- To ensure equality between men and women through reforms at national level of laws and policies to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to integrate new provisions. National laws should conform to international conventions.

- To enhance the implementation of those changes through strong information and sensitisation campaigns for men and in particular for reaching a consensus over women's rights.

- To promote law education for women in particular and men in general and to ensure women's access to free or cheap legal assistance services.

- Emphasis should be put on women in rural areas.

  - Efforts should be made in order to integrate women at all levels in law revision, debate and implementation ;
  - To increase women's access to formal and informal legal systems.

2. In post-genocide years, armed conflicts and violence existing in several places.

- To emphasise victims' protection and rehabilitation; in particular those who were sexually abused and tortured.

  Programmes for victims of rape should be integrated in global programmes, if possible without stressing their isolated situation.

The commitment by the International Penal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to treat rape as a war crime has made up a new consensus.

Similarly the Rwandan tribunal was explicitly empowered to try cases of rape as a war crime.

Following this example, other countries will have to make efforts to ensure that widespread cases of rape in armed conflicts are defined and tried as a war crime.

- To ensure that witnesses of violence are protected and to put in place a security framework for their testimony.

- Victims of genocide, armed conflicts, apartheid and violence feel the need to be understood. This is so important for their societies in order to know the truth and the scope of past abuses. Responsiveness and other exchange methods should be set up to allow those victims to express themselves on those situations they witnessed.

- Planners and implementers of genocide must be arrested and given an adequate platform to explain in detail their involvement in those violations and abuses so that they may feel remorse for their actions.

- Reparation is necessary for the reconciliation process. Where leaders took the country's resources outside, there should be regional and international cooperation to return them for use in the country's development.

  An independent mechanism to monitor those reparation payments and other forms of contributions is needed.

  The putting in place of a fund to support victims of genocide and massacres in Rwanda using resources from those who committed genocide as well as other countries' contributions and institutions and people's interest to support such an initiative.

- To enhance a global commitment for extraditing those persons accused of genocide and crimes against humanity and to ensure that no country is their peace haven.

- To prevent refugees from expulsion and to promote acceptance by host countries of their obligations towards refugees as stated in international laws.

- Refugee and displaced women are a strong force of endurance, with no resources and have to be associated with decision making where they are concerned and their capacities should be used in all aid initiatives and rehabilitation.

- Prisoners' voluntary participation to reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts should be encouraged and facilitated as a contribution to
- reconciliation.

A Culture of peace

- Promoting a culture of peace will increase awareness by the fact that violence is not a solution to read or felt differences. A culture of peace should be based upon justice, tolerance and compassion. In Africa, the size of the community enhances this global culture which should be maintained and protected.

Actions proposed

1 Information exchange

- To ensure that mechanisms for information exchanges are objective and non-partisan. Information should be given in local languages and in the most understandable forms.

The above cannot succeed but

- With setting up a framework in which women are free to discuss and exchange information without the interference of parties to the conflict.
- To ease visits by women to the frontlines.
- To use a vibrant and independent media system by setting up new regional radio stations to promote peace and gender equality.
- To ensure freedom of speech for all and the media.

Rwanda should serve as an example concerning consequences of violence's and conflict and as a warning to people. Leaders, especially those who promote violence, should be encouraged to make Rwanda their study case in order to understand the consequences of divisionist and unfair policies.

For incoming conflict situations, there is need to organise visits by men and women who have experienced of such horrors as a preventive measure against the erupting conflict.

To organise regular exchanges between women's peace movements so as to make effective partnerships for a greater impact in pacification efforts, to learn one another's experiences and to analyse together the strength and the weakness of past efforts.

2. Education

To promote an education which enhances girls' and boys' potentialities and to ensure they play active and constructive roles within their society.

Components could be :
- education on civic and human rights ;
- a school syllabus which promotes critical analysis and thought ;
- affirmative action measures to keep girls at school together with information to parents and complementary measures to ease girls' access to school.

To organise education programmes for local and central authorities in order to enhance good governance (promotion of women's and children's rights, credibility, fairness, peace education, reconciliation mechanisms, etc..).

3. Culture

To promote those cultural aspects and traditions which strengthen or support women advancement and integrate peace and development. Dance, poems, theatre, films and music are an important society self-expression and may be used for a positive change.

4. Good governance

To reinforce mechanisms for just governance. Transparency in the decision making process to ensure a fair use of resources and credibility are critical elements.

To promote women participation in governance in order to ensure that their perspectives, different in quality, influence decision making and reorient priorities for the good of the whole nation.

To encourage a fair and inclusive vision and through women participation to leadership, the spreading of positive practices and their strengthening.

To support the use of the wide variety of local mechanisms in conflict resolution and to involve grassroots mechanisms and households in conflict management.

Peace mechanisms for an effective gender approach

1 Conflict forewarning mechanisms

To reinforce mechanisms meant to foretell on time human rights' violations and to gear up the preventive action. In spite of existing dynamic actions and organs, the need to ensure that critical information is documented, utilised and spread still remains.

These actions are essential to lessen tensions in societies and to pre-empt potential conflicts. Women must organise campaigns to prevent and eradicate violence and killings in their grass root communities and country.

To support women's actions and strategies for conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution. To strengthen women organisations acting as peace advocates within decision making mechanisms at all levels.

All conflicts do not have the same causes. There is need therefore to develop a variety of innovative mechanisms and strategies for quick action.

To promote open societies in which all the citizens enjoy the right to freely participate in national programmes; a free press is an integral part of the guarantee for a free and open society.

2. National and International Mechanisms

A recent report on the International Penal Tribunal for Rwanda denounced the dysfunctioning and inefficiency of this mechanism.

The international community will have to make it its top priority the re-organisation and tight follow up of this mechanism and the setting up of a permanent and well documented international tribunal.

Efforts to integrate a gender perspective within the investigations will have to be multiplied.

To search for traditional methods and mechanisms for conflict resolution particularly those put in place by women in order to reinforce and to spread those which have proved efficient.

To study and to document reconciliation mechanisms and processes and to eradicate impunity in several countries so as to change the situation. Latin American countries and the Republic of South Africa are shining examples in implementing such a process.

To strengthen and to make concrete women initiatives in rehabilitation, reconciliation and peacemaking process.

3. Overall measures :

- To set up and to support independent women organisations and their peace movements, including the newly launched federation for women movements.

- To launch an international support group for Rwandan women in order to plead their cause and to help them in their peace and development initiatives.

- Putting in place effective partnership mechanisms for peace, gender equality and development.

Implementing those three aims and objectives requires a strong partnership among women, the civil society, the private sector, the Government and the international community.

Actions proposed :

Development partners will have to encourage the emergency and sustainability of a dynamic civil society by supporting women groups, grassroot organisations and decentralised processes.

Donors' procedures should be revised in order to be adequate in supporting women's and grass root initiatives. In this context, donors should make efforts to ensure that international initiatives are launched.

All the partners should emphasise assistance for capacity building in analysing and solving women's problems. In this context, efforts have to be made in order to strengthen women structural organisations.

Government must uphold their commitments made in Beijing and speed up their efforts in implementing them.

The private sector should make efforts to offer a favourable environment to women's economic initiatives and to support poverty alleviation strategies.
For instance, by contributing to funds meant to offer capital to poor women and to invest in sectors which improve women's living conditions.

All the partners, in particular donors, should allocate some funds to support women peace initiatives and their participation at the highest level of decision making.

Economic capacity building for sustainable peace

The main objective is to eliminate poverty and to attain sustainable development and economic capacity building for peaceful purposes.

Actions proposed :

1. To end women's poverty

To adopt and to reinforce macroeconomic policies and development strategies to satisfy poor women 's expectations.

To cancel all Rwanda's debts, commercial, bilateral and multilateral and to ensure that funds availed are in particular meant for poor women.

To restructure and reorient public budget allocations to the promotion of economic opportunities for women and of equal access opportunity to production resources.

To enhance and to strengthen women organisational structures so as to ease their accommodation to the economic environment and their containing difficult or critical times.
To ensure the minimum basic needs such as in particular shelter , water, healthcare and education.

2. **Military expenditure :**

To lower military expenses and to increase the available resources for social development.

To use all possible and time effective strategies to encourage social disarmament and demilitarisation.

To promote a global action to lower and eventually to put an end to arms' production and sales.

3. **Women's Economic Capacity Building**

- To create an environment allowing women to fully participate in economic development. This could include : developing for women conceptual and practical methodologies and their applications in order to integrate gender perspectives in all aspects of economic policy formulation.

- To adopt policies and strategies for land reform on property so as to allow women's access for production purposes.

- To ensure women's access to property and other resources through a legal reform (women information and training is needed to improve their knowledge of rights and possibilities).

- To reform investment codes and other laws so as to diversify economic choices, employment and income generating activities.

- To make affirmative actions in the fields of employment, training, credit and social services.

- To offer technical training to women in all sectors so as to enhance their capacity and participation to economic activities.

- Macro-strategies should be tested with existing structures instead of solely integrating women. While efforts are being made to improve enterprises and women's benefits, efforts are also to be made to lift inequalities at local, national and international levels.

- Income generating projects could be based on women's availability analysis. All the partners should review their support to micro-enterprises so as to ensure both their qualitative and quantitative impact.